

Redeeming Play

Strategic Engagement in the
Global Gaming Space



Table of Contents

03

Introduction

04

Opportunity

08

Games

11

Producers & Influencers

16

Proposed Strategies & Case
Studies

28

Next Steps

Gaming is not a pastime—it's a culture.

In 2025, more than 90 million of the young people OneHope serves will likely be gamers.*

For them, gaming isn't just a way to have fun— it's where they hang out with friends, explore identity, and experience meaning.

It's a global space that shapes hearts and minds. And right now, it's mostly unformed by voices of faith.

That's not just a gap — it's an invitation.



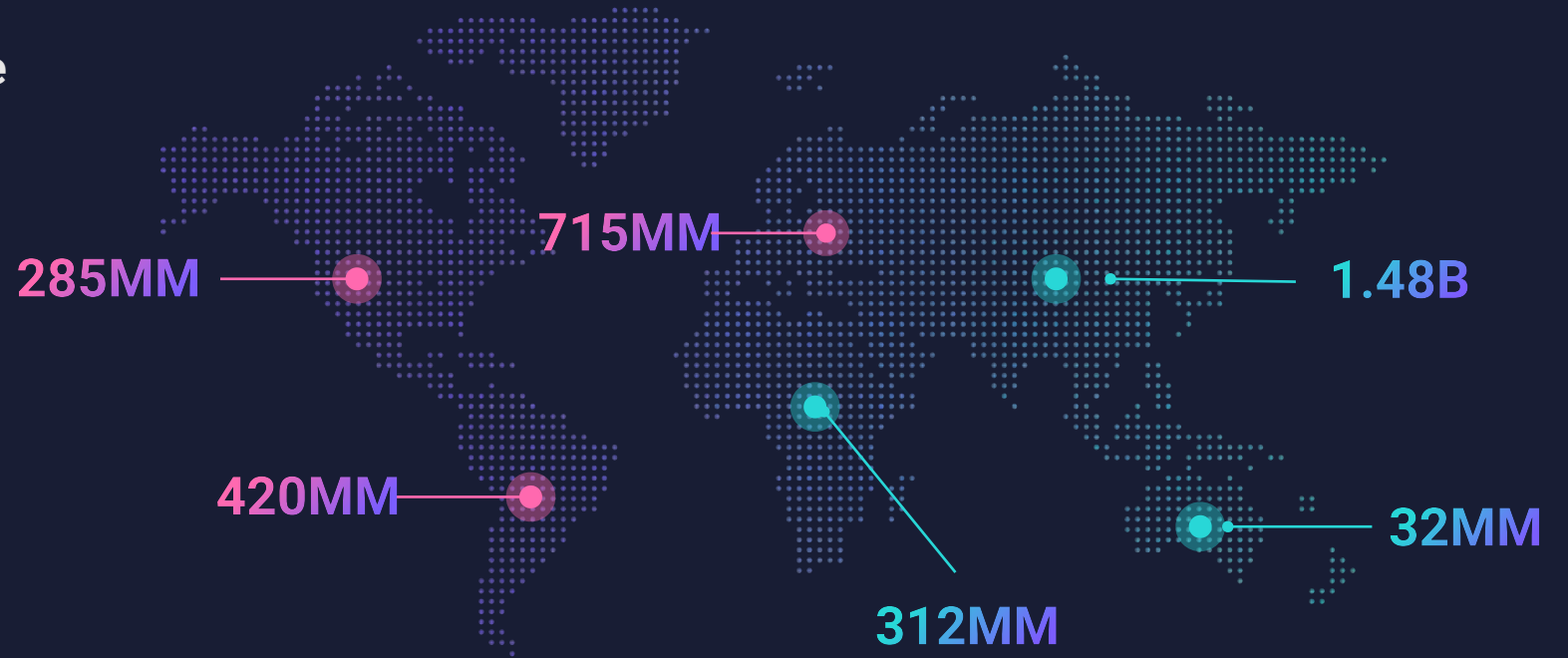
**80% of kids 2-18 identified as "gamers" in a recent Bain Co. survey.*

The Opportunity

“The single biggest misconception about games is that they're an escapist waste of time.”

—Jane McGonigal, Futurist and Game Designer

A Global Snapshot



Four out of every ten people you meet call themselves “gamers.”

Where and How Long People Play



Common Platforms

- **Mobile (88%):** Quick Bursts, 3-10 sessions per day
- **PC (55%):** Flexible, can play solo or multiplayer
- **Console (35%):** Longer Focused Sessions (avg. 1-2 hours)

Favorite Genres by Age (Excluding FPS*)

- **5-8:** Puzzle, Open-ended, Educational
- **8-12:** Feel-good Adventures, Jump-and-Run, Creative building
- **13-25:** Story-Driven Games, Survival Competition, Simulation

Gamers spend an average of 12.8 hours a week playing games.

* FPS (First-Person Shooter) Games like Halo and Call of Duty

Esports: The Fastest-Growing Arena

- 532M global viewers (2023)
- \$1.1B in revenue (2023)
- 8600+ US high school esports teams
- Also growing quickly in South America, Europe, and Asia
- Few spiritually grounded voices



“Virtual Gaming will become an Olympic Sport by 2040.”

—Duncan Wardle, Former Head of Innovation and Creativity at Disney

The Games

“When we play games, we step into a mindset where we're **more motivated, optimistic, resilient, and creative**—and those are the strengths we need to tackle real-world challenges.”

—Jane McGonigal, Futurist and Game Designer

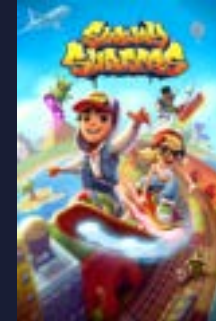
Some Popular Games



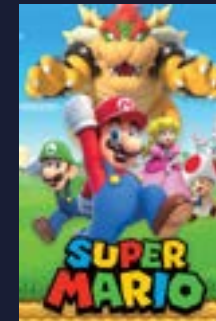
- **Age Rating:** Everyone 10+
- **Number of Monthly Players:** 200M (2025)
- **Synopsis:** *Minecraft* allows players to explore, build, and survive in a blocky, procedurally generated 3D world. Players can gather resources, craft items, and construct structures, fostering creativity and problem-solving skills. *Sandbox Game*



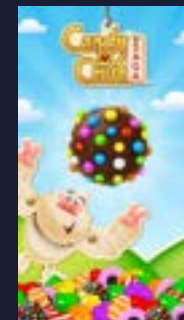
- **Age Rating:** Teen
- **Number of Units Sold:** 11M (2024)
- **Synopsis:** The *Spider-Man* video game series, developed by Insomniac Games, allows players to assume the role of Peter Parker, also known as Spider-Man, as he navigates life in New York City. Players engage in web-swinging traversal, combat against various villains, and unravel narratives that intertwine Peter's personal life with his superhero responsibilities. *Action-Adventure Game*



- **Age Rating:** Everyone 10+
- **Number of Downloads:** 167M (2024)
- **Synopsis:** Players dash through subway tracks, dodging trains and obstacles while collecting coins and power-ups. The most popular game in the Google Play Store. *Endless Runner Game*



- **Age Rating:** Everyone
- **Number of Units Sold:** 600M (2021)
- **Synopsis:** The *Super Mario* series consists of games where players control Mario (and sometimes other characters) on adventures to rescue Princess Peach from the villain Bowser. Gameplay typically involves running, jumping, and collecting items across various themed levels. *Platformer Game*



- **Age Rating:** Everyone
- **Number of Monthly Players:** 200M (2024)
- **Synopsis:** Challenges players to swap colored candies to make matches of three or more, progressing through levels with varying objectives. *Match-Three Game*

Some Popular Games



- **Age Rating:** Mature
- **Number of Units Sold:** 81M (2021)
- **Synopsis:** *Halo* is set in a science fiction universe where players assume the role of Master Chief, a super-soldier combating the alien Covenant. The game combines shooting mechanics with a rich narrative and expansive environments. *First-Person Shooter*



- **Age Rating:** Teen
- **Number of Monthly Players:** 200M (2023)
- **Synopsis:** *Roblox* is an online platform that enables users to create and play games designed by other users. It offers a vast array of user-generated games across various genres, encouraging creativity and social interaction. *Game Creation/ Sandbox Game*



- **Age Rating:** Everyone 10+
- **Number of Units Sold:** 170M (2024)
- **Synopsis:** *The Legend of Zelda* is an action-adventure series set in the fictional land of Hyrule. Players typically control Link, a courageous young hero, on a quest to rescue Princess Zelda and thwart the evil plans of Ganon. The games are renowned for their exploration, puzzle-solving, and combat elements, offering players a richly detailed world filled with dungeons, quests, and a variety of items and weapons. *Action-Adventure Game*



- **Age Rating:** Everyone
- **Number of Units Sold:** 33M (2021)
- **Synopsis:** In *Animal Crossing*, players move to a deserted island and develop it into a community of anthropomorphic animals. Activities include fishing, bug catching, and decorating homes, all in real-time with seasonal changes. *Social Simulation Game*

The Producers & Influencers

“Games were not just a diversion, I realized. Games could make you feel.”

—Sid Meier, Game Designer and creator of Civilization

Producers



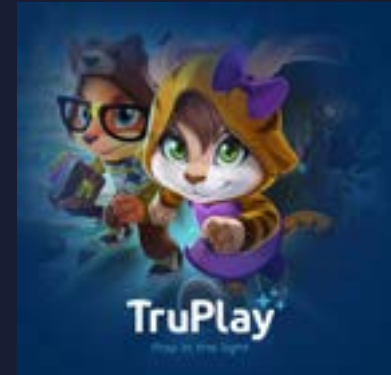
IMD Interactive's vision is to provide free Bible video games to over 3.3 billion gamers worldwide, combining faith and technology to make scriptural teachings accessible and engaging.

Their flagship project, *The Anointed*, is an action-adventure game that immerses players in biblical narratives, aiming to engage the global unreached, equip the church, and disciple nations through interactive storytelling.



Gate Zero is a story-rich adventure game by Norwegian studio **Bible X**, designed to bring the Bible to life through immersive gameplay. Set in the year 2072, players use a time-travel device to explore 1st-century Israel, interact with key figures, and experience the teachings of Jesus firsthand.

With a blend of stealth, exploration, mission-solving, and mobile-enabled co-op play, the game offers a unique way to engage scripture.



TruPlay Games' mission is to transform generations by embedding biblical truths into engaging and educational games, comics, and videos.

By integrating scripture and Christian values into interactive media, TruPlay aims to offer families wholesome entertainment options that align with their faith.

Influencers*



Love Thy Nerd's mission is to embody the love of Jesus within nerd culture by building meaningful relationships and engaging with individuals in both online and in-person settings.

They strive to serve and support nerds globally, helping others to better understand and connect with this diverse community.



The **Nerd Culture Ministry Summit (NCMS)** is dedicated to bridging the gap between church culture and nerd culture by equipping ministry leaders to better love and serve their nerdy neighbors.

The summit aims to identify, activate, equip, and empower those called into nerd culture ministry, providing tools and insights to engage effectively with this diverse community.

Through keynotes, workshops, and collaborative sessions, NCMS fosters a space for learning and connection among ministry leaders passionate about reaching nerd culture with the love of Christ.



XP Church exists to help every gamer **Know God, Experience Community, Discover Their Purpose, and Make a Difference.**

Originally launched as GodSquad Church, the ministry was founded to meet gamers where they are and guide them from virtual life to eternal life.

With live services streamed on platforms like Twitch and Discord, XP Church has built a digital-first faith community that speaks the language of gamer culture while pointing players to the hope found in Christ. Their mission is deeply relational and immersive—bringing the church to those unlikely to walk into one.

Influencers



Jaclyn S. Parrish

Jaclyn S. Parrish* is the Director of Marketing at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where she applies her expertise as a writer and marketing specialist within faith-based nonprofits.

She is the author of *All in Good Fun: A Theology of Fun (and Why Christians Should Have More of It)*, in which she examines the biblical perspective on fun and its significance in the Christian life.

Additionally, Parrish has contributed to The Gospel Coalition, further showcasing her engagement with theological discourse.



* Jason Tilley may or may not have a professional crush on Jaclyn S. Parrish.

Influencers

These influencers are not faith-driven but have explored game design in traditionally non-gaming spaces.



Dr. Jane McGonigal

Jane McGonigal (PhD) is a game designer and author known for applying game mechanics to real-world challenges in non-traditional gaming spaces.

Her work includes *World Without Oil*, an alternate reality game simulating a global crisis, and *Evoke*, created with the World Bank to empower youth in Africa to solve social issues through storytelling and action. She also developed *SuperBetter* to support physical and mental recovery through gamified resilience-building.

Across her projects, McGonigal has shown how games can inspire behavior change, problem-solving, and personal growth beyond entertainment contexts (Wired, [Wikipedia](#), The Peace Studio).



Lee Sheldon

Lee Sheldon is a game designer, author, and former screenwriter known for pioneering the use of game design in education. After a career writing for shows like *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, he turned to interactive media and developed the “multiplayer classroom” model, where students earn experience points (XP) instead of grades and level up by completing assignments.

His book *The Multiplayer Classroom* has become a guide for educators seeking to gamify learning and increase student engagement, and he has implemented this approach at institutions like Indiana University and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI, [Amazon](#)).



Jane's Ted Talk: Games Can Make a Better World



Lee Talks Multiplayer Classroom

Proposed Strategy & Case Studies

“Good video games incorporate **good learning principles**. They create motivation, deep engagement, and the opportunity to practice identity, problem-solving, and persistence.”

—James Paul Gee, Author

Five Areas of Impact

When thinking about how OneHope might participate in the gaming space, consider five key areas of potential impact:

1. **Create** – Build original games for scripture engagement
2. **Integrate** – Reimagine OH products through game design (ARGs, branching storylines)
3. **Partner** – Support existing developers, influencers, and networks
4. **Engage** – Minister to esports athletes through coaches, teams, and tournaments
5. **Shape** – Become a thought leader and convene global theology-of-games conversations



Create



- Develop original game IP rooted in scripture engagement
- Focus on mobile-first, low-bandwidth, indie-scale games
- Test with MVP-style pilots for global reach

Create: Case Studies



1. Seeds of Light

Genre: Cozy Sim | *Audience:* Ages 8–12

Players tend a garden representing the Fruit of the Spirit. Each plant grows only through kind actions, patient choices, and cooperative mini-games. Devotional moments emerge during rest and watering sessions.

2. Path of the Wayfarer

Genre: CYOA RPG | *Audience:* Ages 13–25

Based on the Book of Acts, players join a network of underground believers and make moral, relational, and faith-based decisions as the early church expands. Ideal for restricted regions.

3. Echoes of the Prophets

Genre: Strategy Sim | *Audience:* Ages 13–25

Players step into the roles of Old Testament prophets, confronting kings and culture. They must balance obedience, courage, and calling, while delivering God's messages.

4. Shepherd's Light

Genre: Puzzle | *Audience:* Ages 5–8

A maze-style game where players search for lost sheep while learning Psalm 23. Includes call-and-response scripture memory.

5. Kingdom Chronicles

Genre: Visual Novel RPG | *Audience:* Ages 13–25

Allegorical stories draw from biblical parables. Players explore themes of forgiveness, humility, and justice through richly branching dialogue and turn-based mini-games.

Integrate



- Apply game design to existing OH projects.
- Increase engagement without full-game builds.
- Examples
 - Alternative Reality Games (ARGs) for discipleship.
 - Branching narratives for print/digital products.
 - Puzzle or mission-based learning in short-term Bible programs.

Integrate: Case Studies



- 1. Lead Today ARG**
Transform the John Maxwell/OneHope curriculum into a short-form Alternate Reality Game. Young adults receive missions and puzzles that help them apply leadership principles to real-world tasks. Scripture is embedded in clues, reflection moments, and co-op discussions.
- 2. Bible App For Kids: The Garden**
A concept that would add a cozy-style game to the Bible App for Kids experience. In this game, players take on the role of a town caretaker—tending to the community's needs and exploring scripture to help meet those needs.
- 3. StoryLab Live Events**
Imagine combining escape room mechanics, interactive theater, and Bible-based decision narratives — all designed for short-term discipleship, evangelism, or VBS-style gatherings. Participants collaborate, solve problems, and make key choices that reflect the themes of the gospel, character, and calling.
- 4. Gaming in our Books and Digital Comics**
We've been experimenting with ways to bring the Book of Hope into the gaming space—from early efforts like the *Rescued* digital extension app to the *Incredible Islands* book tie-in to more recent projects like *Adventure Seekers*. We're also exploring how one of our digital comics could become a "Choose Your Own Adventure"—style game, giving players agency in how they engage with the story and its spiritual themes.

Partner



- Support and equip Christian influencers, streamers, and developers
- Opportunities:
 - Theological support and community care
 - Co-branded content and partnerships
 - Discipleship tools for digital missionaries
- Potential Partners: Love Thy Nerd, Imaldris, XP Church

Partner: Case Studies



1. Influencer Guild

A global network of faith-driven creators offering mutual support, mentorship, and spiritual care. Includes quarterly retreats, coaching huddles, and platform visibility through OH social channels.

2. Micro-Grant Accelerator

Host game jams offering \$2500–\$15,000 grants to indie developers or micro-streamers who create scripture-infused content. OH offers project feedback, theology vetting, and global amplification of results.

3. Devotional Tool Kit for Streamers

Develop faith-based content creators with ready-to-use stream overlays, talking point prompts, and scripture-centered challenges they can share during live sessions — helping them naturally integrate God’s Word into gameplay without feeling forced or preachy. It’s designed to fit seamlessly into any stream style, whether casual, competitive, or story-driven.

4. Become A Valuable NPC*

OneHope can play the role of a valuable NPC in the Christian gaming space—offering support, wisdom, and connection. By backing events like the Nerd Culture Ministry Summit and bridging initiatives to the broader community, we help others level up.

*A NPC (Non-Player Character) is any character in a game that is **not controlled by the player**. Instead, it's controlled by the game itself. NPCs can give quests, provide information, sell items, or just help bring the game world to life.

Engage



- Engage the esports world with discipleship infrastructure
- Train spiritual coaches for teams and clubs
- Create devotional materials for use in practice sessions
- Pilot in 2–3 regions to learn and adapt
- Partner with orgs like FCA

Engage: Case Studies



- 1. Esports Discipleship Pilot**
Partner with 3–5 esports clubs or schools to embed spiritual coaches and pilot weekly small-group devotionals. Include leadership training, team-based memory verse competitions, and digital tracking tools.
- 2. Pre-Game Devos**
Develop an app or mobile-optimized website for delivering 2-minute spiritual warmups for players before practices or matches. Include scripture, reflection questions, and other tools from a gamer's perspective.
- 3. Devotional Tool Kit for Streamers**
Develop faith-based content creators with ready-to-use stream overlays, talking point prompts, and scripture-centered challenges they can share during live sessions — helping them naturally integrate God's Word into gameplay without feeling forced or preachy. It's designed to fit seamlessly into any stream style, whether casual, competitive, or story-driven.

Shape



- Become a thought leader in faith-driven gaming
- Lead conversations around:
 - Theology of fun and play
 - Game content and story
 - Faith-integrated game mechanics
 - Engaging target audiences
- Launch global roundtables, podcasts, and practical resources

Shape: Case Studies



- 1. Theology of Games Roundtable Series**
Gather game designers, theologians, pastors, and youth leaders for curated in-person and virtual discussions on redemptive mechanics, biblical story structure, and discipleship through design.
- 2. Faith and Play Research Project**
Commission research through a Christian university partnership to explore how games influence identity, empathy, and spiritual imagination. Publish findings for the greater community.
- 3. Global Design Fellowship**
Launch a 12-month mentorship cohort for emerging Christian game designers. Blend spiritual formation with design mentorship, culminating in a playable prototype informed by Scripture.

Next Steps

“It’s the job that’s never started that takes the longest to finish.”

—JRR Tolkien, Author, of The Lord of the Rings Trilogy

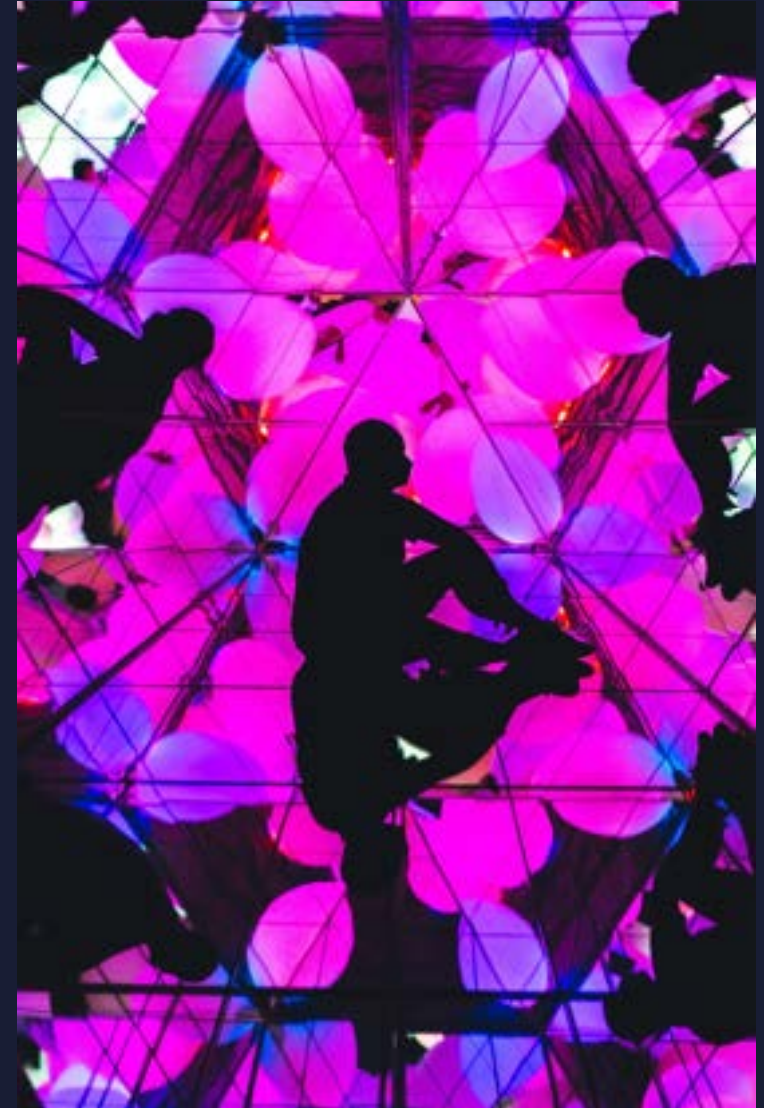
We Don't Have To Start Big



- Prototype low-cost concepts: Test “Seeds of Light” or “Whispers in the Wind” as MVPs
- We're already applying game design to some of our products. Identify others we might prototype
- Pilot esports devos: In 2–3 partner schools or clubs
- Host one roundtable

Some Questions to Consider

- Is gaming already influencing the children and youth you reach?
- What are the platforms, genres, and behaviors common in your context?
- Which of the five strategies best aligns with what's already happening?



Why Now?

- 3.3B gamers = 40% of the world
- 90M+ of OH's 2025 reach are likely gamers
- Gaming is formative, not just entertaining
- The space is wide open for thoughtful, Scripture-centered leadership





Thank You.

“Video games are one of the most significant cultural forces in the world today. If the church wants to love people well, it must understand **how to meet them in the spaces they inhabit most.**”

—Drew Dixon, Editor-in-Chief, Love Thy Nerd